

Learning to Hunt

Hosting a hunting-based outdoor skills event in your community



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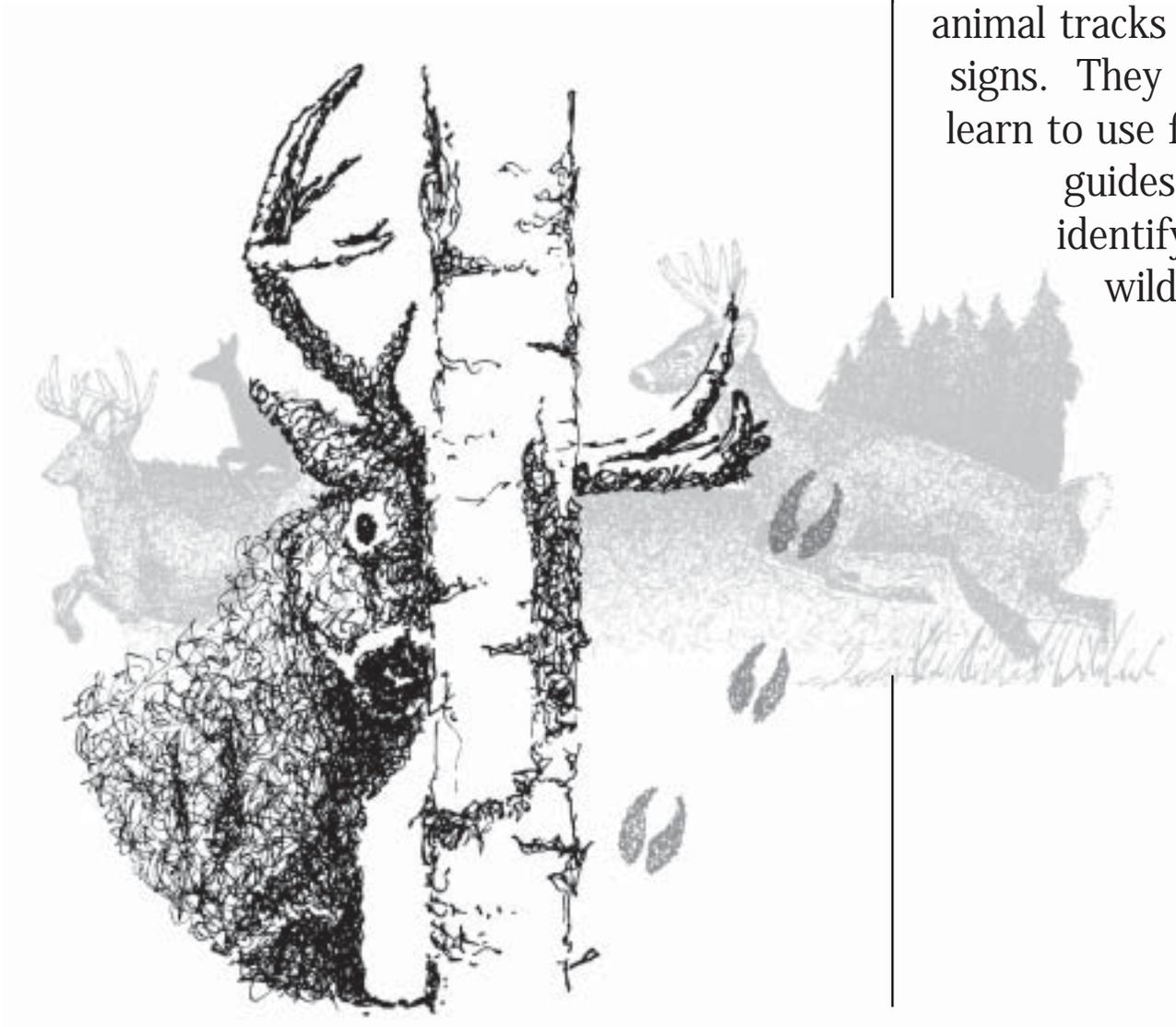
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What's Wildlife?

Wildlife identification
and sign

Participants are challenged to identify taxidermy specimens and photos of wildlife, animal tracks and signs. They also learn to use field guides for identifying wildlife.



Station 2

What's Wildlife

Learning to Hunt

Objectives

Participants shall:

- identify 15 species of wildlife.
- use field guides to identify wildlife.

Equipment

Numerous taxidermy mounts of wildlife, including game animals and some non-game animals that may be confused with game animals, (e.g., a trumpeter swan mistaken for a snow

goose). Ask local nature centers or schools if they have mounted specimens they will let you use. This activity should be conducted indoors or in a picnic shelter to prevent rain or sun damage to fragile specimens.

Tables

Laminated posters or large magazine photos of game birds and mammals.

Rubber tracks and several boxes with moist sand for making tracks. (Available for sale through NASCO Science Supply in Fort Atkinson, WI 1-800-558-9595.)

Samples of animal sign (deer, rabbit, porcupine scat, deer- and rabbit-browsed twigs, section of a small sapling with a buck rub, tree stump left by a beaver, photo of a fox den).

Include as "sign" examples of potential wildlife foods, such as cob of corn, acorn, grain, aspen twig or cattail

6 or more wildlife

identification field guides

Clipboards, pencils and paper for each participant

Large stick-on colored dots and a marking pen

Trail flagging



Station Setup

Before participants arrive, set out the taxidermy specimens. Hang free-flying birds from the ceiling, mount other flying birds to a wall and place mammals and standing birds and turtles on tables.

Set out boxes of sand on tables. Use the rubber tracks to make a few depressions in the moist sand. Try to be as realistic in the placement of the fore and hind feet.

Set out samples of wildlife “sign” on the tables.

Use the large colored dots and marking pen to place a numbered dot on or near each specimen.

Place field guides around the area for reference.

Outside the shelter, find a trail where you can scrape away leaves and debris to get down to the dirt. Use rubber tracks to make prints in the trail. Dampen the soil with the spray bottle if necessary to make a clean impression “Salt” the trail with as many wildlife sign as you can find, or use actual sign found on the trail. Mark the trail with flagging so you can find each sign and set of tracks later.



Station 2

What's Wildlife

Activity

Learning to Hunt

Procedure

When your participants arrive, ask them to be seated outside the area where you have set up the test specimens. Tell the participants how important it is to be able to identify the wildlife they are hunting. If they misidentify an animal during hunting and end up shooting an illegal bird or mammal, they can be fined. Ignorance is no excuse for shooting the wrong animal.

Show the participants the variety of field guides that are available for them to use during this activity. Demonstrate the main features of each field guide and how to use them in identifying wildlife or wildlife sign.

Take the participants to the "salted" trail and ask them to look for signs of wildlife. As they find the signs, stop with the group and ask if anyone knows what animal made the sign and why. Point out deer and rabbit trails, beaver lodges, fox dens, etc.

Hand out clipboards, pencils and paper. Have participants number their papers with the number of specimens they are to identify. Tell the participants that you will lead them into the Wildlife Room where they will look at and try to identify numbered specimens. Have them identify the taxidermy specimens first. Tell participants to put an

"X" by any number of those specimens they can't identify right away. After they cycle through the entire room, have them use the field guides to figure out which animals stumped them.

After everyone has finished, walk over to each specimen and announce the correct answer to the group. Have participants to grade their own papers. How many did they answer correctly without using the field guides? How many did they get correct after using the guides?

Give plenty of positive reinforcement. Encourage those who did not do very well to keep trying and to spend more time using field guides in the field.


End of Teaching Station

